

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 18, 19, 23 and 25 are now pending in the application, with Claims 18 and 19 being independent. Claim 18 has been amended and Claims 1-5, 8-17, 20-22 and 24 have been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that Claims 18, 19, 23 and 25 are allowed. Other than Claim 18, these claims have not been amended herein, thus remaining in condition for allowance. Claim 18 has been amended to attend to an informality, and also remains allowable.

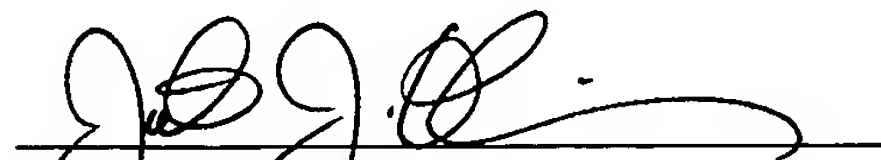
Claims 1-5, 8-17, 20-22 and 24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 112 and 102. Claims 1-5, 8-17, 20-22 and 24 have been cancelled herein, rendering these rejections moot. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice to or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejections, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicants earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


Justin J. Oliver
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 44,986

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200
JJOlvgm

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